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REFERENCES

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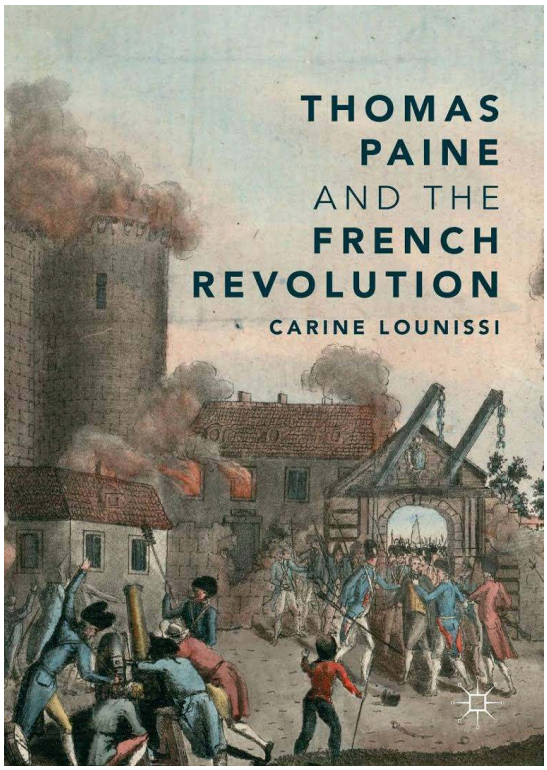

1 Carine Lounissi's study of the 'French Paine' is a highly valuable and necessary contribution to the wealth of scholarly work devoted to the self-styled citizen of the world. The author builds on her more theoretical study of Thomas Paine's writings, published in 2012, to construct a contextualized portrait of the international revolutionary during the years he spent in France as an observer, commentator and agent of the French Revolution between 1787 and 1802. In doing so, she has addressed a subject which was calling out for further investigation. With the notable exception of Alfred O. Aldridge's *Man of Reason: The Life of Thomas Paine,* published over sixty years ago, most of Paine's political writings have been seen through the lens of the British radical movement and his role as a catalyst of the American Revolution. Paine's contribution to the French Revolution has been given little substantial attention, perhaps in part due to the gaping holes in the archives, which could preclude a less determined scholar from attempting such an endeavour. Lounissi's study engages actively with the existing body of literature on her subject, drawing upon the findings of Mark Philp, John Keane, Gary Kates and William Doyle among others, while shedding new light on many of the historiographical debates over the role of this controversial figure in French affairs, with the intention of mapping out the "complexity and multifaceted intellectual personality" of her subject and challenging much of the received wisdom (and signalling oversights) on Paine's time in France (315). The author refutes the traditional categorisation—fueled by the damning verdict of Paine's contemporary and associate Manon Roland[1]—of Paine as more of a revolutionary capable of sparking insurrection than a capable governmental theorist, by stating at the outset that there was a "thread of republican thought in his writings that grew and evolved with the various critical moments of the revolutionary era in which he lived and to which he responded in various forms" (3).

2 The book is divided into three parts which deal with Paine's contribution to the events in France and commentary on the Revolution chronologically. Beginning with a take on how Paine saw the events of 1789 in part one of *Rights of Man*, Lounissi goes on, in part two, to study Paine's involvement in the creation of the first French republic until his arrest and incarceration in December 1793. The final section tackles a period that the author considers "one of the most baffling moments in his career" (217-18), the years after the fall of Robespierre to Paine's departure from France under the Consulat in 1802.

3 In discussing Paine's reaction to the events of 1789 in part one, Lounissi revisits the Paine-Burke debate and considers his views on the 'legitimacy' of the Revolution in the broader context of the pamphlet exchange that took place after the publication of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in November 1790. Lounissi's reflections lead her to discuss Paine's ideas in the light of other contemporary thinkers and writers (Barlow, Mackintosh, Priestley and Raynal among others), drawing out the connections and echoes between them. She investigates the sources of and influences on the first part of *Rights of Man*, which she views "as a nexus where the views of French Americanophiles and American Francophiles met" (48), making the case that Paine was not dwelling on the reformed French political system in this work but had his eye firmly on the political system in Britain. The author defends the argument that Paine saw in the changes underway in France, even from the earliest stages, "a revolution of or for sovereignty and not merely a revolution against monarchy or aristocracy" (81). This would be confirmed by his apparent vindication of popular intervention in the fall of the Bastille

and, later, in the August Days, and view of popular violence as being due to the failings of the National Assembly rather than an anarchic expression of mob rule. Lounissi argues that Paine strategically kept his criticism of popular excesses in check by restricting its expression to private correspondence.

4 The author attributes the "blanks and blindspots" that Paine shows in his understanding of the Revolution to his attempt to reach a dual audience of both "uneducated and lower-class" readers and a "higher-class intellectual or political circle" (2–3) or "popular" readers and "informed" readers (50). While the observation is valid, the separation of Paine's intended readership into two distinct groupings is somewhat problematic, given that Paine's lower-class audience were probably not "readers" in their own right, owing to the poor levels of literacy of the period, but were being read to in collective evening gatherings convened by corresponding and debating societies and presided over by those literate or professional men who were also closely connected to the second group of intellectuals and political influencers she identifies. In other words, how Paine's texts were read and received also matters and the different sections of Paine's audience, while divergent, did overlap.

5 Part two of the book contains three essential chapters on Paine's contribution to the debates animating the French nation from the period prior to the abortive establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1791 to Paine's arrest at the end of 1793. The author concludes that Paine's involvement was substantial not just symbolic and that it is a hazardous undertaking to align Paine's views with those of a particular group in the National Convention, given the extent to which his views changed over the period. In the first of these chapters Lounissi suggests that Paine held back from overtly affirming his preference for republican government in *Rights of Man* Part One for strategic rather than ideological reasons and was already committed to a republican solution in France before the king's flight to Varennes in June 1791 which he saw nevertheless as a "critical moment" in the progress of the Revolution.

6 One of the challenges encountered by the author is in trying to access Paine's 'actual' views which she suggests were not revealed in his writings. She undertakes painstaking investigation to try to read into certain omissions in *Rights of Man* Part One evidence of views withheld or toned down for pragmatic purposes. The chapter also contains a meticulous enquiry into the extent of Paine's involvement in the editing and publican of *Le Républicain* in July 1791 (although reference to Rachel Hammersley's research in this field would be welcome). What emerges from Lounissi's study is the crucial role that an anticipated readership played in shaping what writers felt they could or could not say. Paine, she argues, held back from expressing deeply-held republican views in *Rights of Man* because he was profoundly aware of the complex and changing circumstances in which his writings would appear. This observation is followed by an instructive discussion of the extent of the divergence between Paine and Sièyes and sheds new light on this debate through an exploration of previously unstudied letters. There are some fascinating insights into the disagreements surrounding Paine's election to the Convention, his probable authorship of an anonymous republican article in the *Feuille villageoise* and the origins of the dedication to Lafayette in Part Two of *Rights of Man*.

7 The following chapter deals with Paine's position during the trial of the king, the timing and significance of his contributions and their reception and influence. Lounissi sweeps aside the view that Paine was a marginal and manipulated figure in the debate

and provides insight into the nature of and reasoning behind Paine's voting record, highlighting that Paine believed the monarchical regime, not the king, was on trial and thus that republicanism could only be secured if royal exile—not the death of Louis—were the outcome. Lounissi has traced the surprising number of times Paine's name is mentioned in the voting procedure (in which, she notes, it was unusual otherwise for individuals to be identified) suggesting that Paine had an "influence and prestige" in the Convention which extended more broadly than has historically been acknowledged (147). The chapter concludes by examining Paine's role on the constitutional committee, an undertaking severely hampered by gaps in the evidence. Lounissi counsels caution in ascribing the drafting of the 'Girondin' constitution of February 1793 to Paine, despite his obvious contribution to the enterprise.

8 The third chapter in this part of the book questions Paine's political affiliations as a member of the National Convention and takes stock of the accuracy of Paine's supposed alignment with the 'Girondin' faction. This is indeed a relevant debate given that it remains a contested area of enquiry as to whether international participants in the revolutionary scene did firmly side with a particular grouping in the Convention and whether such political affinities neatly intersected with their sociable circles. There is a considerable body of evidence which points to British observers of the Revolution being loathe to commit themselves to a particular bloc given that, with the notable exception of Paine himself, most did not have representative responsibilities. As the author indicates, historians such as Alison Fitzpatrick and William Doyle have also highlighted the problematic nature of attempting to fit Convention members into clear categories when there is so much ongoing debate about what the Girondins stood for and whether they can legitimately be termed a group in their own right, given the heterogeneity of their views and voting patterns. As Lounissi herself contends, the term itself can be seen as anachronistic. The author tries to resolve this dilemma by looking at Paine's 'connections' and 'collaborations' with so-called Girondins such as Bonneville, Condorcet and Brissot. Yet, as the author, with a transparency that is a hallmark of her work, admits, "what confuses the issue is the lack of material to confirm or document their connection and relationship further, such as letters or accounts of meetings and testimonies. This lack encourages the drawing of uncertain parallels which mainly rely on a mere comparison of their published writings, an approach which has its limits" (184).

9 Paine's name was instrumentalised by all parties to the extent that, at times, he appears as a cypher, someone whose views could be manipulated to serve whichever purpose was the order of the day and the priority of the speaker. Paine, in this portrait, becomes more of an idea than a man. As a reader, one is curious to discover how he felt when his words were used out of context and whether he disputed such exploitation of his name to settle partisan scores. It would be interesting to find out about the reactions of a man that associates and contemporaries depicted as a colourful figure. In this portrait of Paine's time in France, Paine the thinker, the writer and political strategist is privileged over Paine the drinker, the host, the entertainer, the rallying figure of a vibrant international community. While not the object of this book, it would nevertheless be important to read this portrait in tandem with biographies and other studies to gain a picture of the different facets of his personality and his time in Paris.

10 This part concludes with the fascinating unearthing and verdict of what appears to have been a translation of a diary allegedly kept by Paine which would have shown him

as a member of the Plaine and therefore more reluctant to commit himself in partisan disputes. Lounissi convincingly demonstrates that the contents are at odds with Paine's probable views and are more likely an attempt at the fabrication of hostile propaganda *a posteriori*, a forgery aimed at "turning Paine into a counter-revolutionary writer in the context of Charles X's France" (197).

11 Part three of this study tackles a moment in Paine's career that sits uncomfortably with his earlier dogged commitment to the forthright avowal of his beliefs, that of his association with the post-Thermidorian regime and his endorsement of the "conservative republican" departures under the Directoire. The new regime and its proponents held that property, not natural right, underpinned the suffrage and therefore justified the restriction of popular participation and a limited franchise as a way of shielding the republic from the scourge of terror. The author shows that Paine disagreed with the premises of the 1795 constitution and refused to accept the view that the Terror had been prompted by democratic experiments. Rather he asserted that emergency government had lasted too long, and that the events of the Terror were the results of the acts of individuals unrestrained by legal safeguards. He reasserted principles he had outlined as early as 1786 such as how to avert abuse of power, and criticised the plan to limit the franchise. Yet he was drawn to revising other ideas (he backtracked on his commitment to unicameralism and was more wary of popular participation and the potential for violence). Louinissi's fine understanding of the historiography of the republican tradition and its iterations comes to light here, as she concurs with Christopher Hamel that Paine "defended a republicanism of rights" (235).

12 The author shows that Paine's speech in July 1795 on the necessity of an equal suffrage did not alter the course that was taken in the Convention, and only a few other representatives, including Lanthenas, agreed with his stance. Yet as Lounissi observes, there was concern that his views and more "democratic ethos" (242) could influence the course of the debate and plans were therefore devised to move to a vote on taxation measures more quickly. By 1797 Paine was praising the Constitution (that he had opposed) for ensuring and bringing stability to French institutions and the country at large, a stability that he overstated. He appears, according to the author, to have "put on a propagandist's suit" under the Directoire, extolling virtues of the Constitution only two years after he had opposed it. As Lounissi explains, "Paine's main purpose was to defend republicanism in a context in which it was threatened, even if it meant supporting a republican regime which was flawed in some respects" (260). In doing so he "overlooked" the overtly "anti-democratic" nature of the 1795 settlement and appears—perplexingly as the author avows—to have expressed views at odds with his developing thoughts on social justice as outlined in *Agrarian Justice,* published in 1797 (261).

13 He patently revised his view of the progress (and role of violence) in a Revolution, but continued to adhere to his views on legality and constitutional safeguards and this aspect of his thought "took precedence over participation" in his writings (264), highlighting what the author sees as his gradual movement away from "social republicanism" back to a vision of republicanism as "first and foremost anti-royalism" (265). Lounissi's thesis that Paine and Benjamin Constant may have had more in common than has hitherto been asserted is a convincing one and merits further scrutiny. She also shows that he was more at odds with Germaine de Staël since the protection of private property was at the core of her vision of republicanism.

14 After 1795 therefore, Paine acted as a "promoter, if not as a downright propagandist, of the Directoire, both vis-à-vis European countries and the United States" and engaged in "public diplomacy in favour of the French regime" (269). He spent his time writing on foreign policy mostly, and consistently supported the project for a landing on British soil, testimony to what Lounissi considers his unerring Francophilia. Paine's writings appeared in Bonneville's *Le Bien informé* in which he railed against George Washington (against whom he held a personal grudge for his extended jail term), and new president John Adams whose apparent monarchical designs he disparaged. He denounced Jay's Treaty, helping to further exacerbate tensions between Federalists and Jeffersonians, and what he saw as abandonment in the US of republican principles.

15 Lounissi's assessment of Paine's reaction to Napoleon's seizure of power is tentative, given that Paine refrained from delivering an outright public verdict on the developments and therefore his views are not clearly accessible. The author again shares with the reader the different alternative possibilities, arguing that Bonaparte's decision to seek Paine's views on military strategy towards Britain, even though his advice was not heeded, "is evidence that the latter was still considered as a kind of expert on British affairs" (298). After 1804 in his appeal to the people of Louisiana, France was no longer held up as an example to the world and Paine was arguing—as Mary Wollstonecraft did—that the French had initiated revolutionary changes before they were ready for them as a civil body. Paine's view on Napoleon's takeover was ambiguous, between admiration of his political and strategic capabilities and unease at the concentration of power in the hands of one man. Lounissi wonders at the pragmatism of Paine after 1795 and concludes that Paine, the unerring Francophile, preferred an imperfect republican regime to hereditary monarchy. His hatred of monarchy, and the English monarchy in particular, allied with his animosity towards Washington and Adams, may have fueled his indefatigable loyalty to the Directoire. He also relished contributing to what the author describes as the "ebbing and flowing" of the French Revolution and, although he was disappointed by the outcome, he never denied its legitimacy.

16 This is a fascinating, well-written and enquiring study which contributes beyond measure to refining the portrait of Thomas Paine's involvement in the French Revolution. For any scholar interested in Paine's French experience, the development of his thought and the wider debate on republicanism in the eighteenth century, this is a stimulating and required read. The author's approach mirrors her counselling of taking into account the complexity of Paine's own French career. She often shares with her reader the different conclusions that could be reached, the ones she considers most viable, and the ones she has dismissed. The reader is not given definitive conclusions and Lounissi shares the gaps in the archives with the reader who is drawn into the murky world of the revolutionary record and led to understand the difficulties encountered. She also helpfully draws out the centrality of little-known or understudied texts in Paine's works. On this note, it would be interesting to glean an idea of her views on the desirability or not of a revision of Paine's collected works given the criticisms that have been levelled at one of her major sources, Eric Foner's two volumes of Paine's collected writings.

17 There are some minor editorial revisions to be made. Some odd spelling errors have been overlooked, the most flagrant being that of Aldridge (misspelt twice as Aldrigde). David Williams was Welsh not English, and the validity of the term "communist" to

describe Babeuf is debatable. The footnotes are substantial and beyond reproach, but in order to fully grasp the nature of the sources used, an alphabetical bibliography feels like a required addition to the volume.

18 On the arguments themselves, very little remains to be said, although I do have one or two comments. As in David V. Erdman's study of John Oswald's time in revolutionary Paris, the very exercise of studying an individual's contribution to the Revolution leads necessarily to a focus on their agency and centrality, which on occasions results in an overstating of their role. Although the author is right to insist on the importance of Paine's contribution to the debates in the Revolution, it might be questioned, for instance, whether it was Paine who forged the 'mass reading public' (Claeys' term) of the late eighteenth century, as the author suggests. The circulation of Paine's writings was certainly wide, but as well as being the work of the author, it was also the tireless and painstaking task of members of corresponding and debating societies across the country as well as small itinerant booksellers, publishers and editors who published, printed, selected and circulated his work for a mass audience. Mary Thale's edited collection of the papers of the London Corresponding Society testifies to the anxiety induced in the authorities at the extent of the circulation of Paine's *Rights of Man* Part Two and the reactions it produced.

19 In focusing primarily on the French context and influences on Paine's work, one wonders whether Lounissi perpetuates in part the compartmentalised view of Paine which she counsels against in her introduction when she says "quite paradoxically, Paine's several careers in the United States, in Great Britain and in France still tend to be dealt with in separate books or studies, whereas they should be studied not as distinct careers but as an evolutionary trajectory" (4). Paine in France was also a Paine in exile from Britain, pursued for seditious libel and whose effigies and book were burnt across the country at the turn of 1793. Despite his own claim in a letter to Attorney General Archibald Macdonald of November 1792 that he had no time to think about his trial in Britain because he was too preoccupied with the French constitution ("The duty I am now engaged in is of too much importance to permit me to trouble myself about your prosecution."[2]), we might wonder to what extent the "French Paine" was still that international citizen, not only multifaceted but multi-*facing*, that Lounissi depicts at the outset. As the author herself points out in part three, "[Paine's] hostility towards the government of his native country never abated and was strong during his whole stay in France" (218).

20 Finally, the author rightly acknowledges the plethora of Paine's French contemporaries from across the revolutionary spectrum who could have influenced or been influenced by Paine or whose ideas were connected to those of the British writer. I would add—and this is not a shortcoming but reflections based on the crossovers between Carine Lounissi's research and my own—that there is also an argument for fitting Paine's work on the French Revolution into the cultural setting and political musings of the British emigrant community resident in Paris at this same period, given that the intersections with Paine's topics of interest are patent. During his early residence in Paris after his arrival in late 1792, Paine initially lodged at Christopher White's English hotel in the passage des Petits Pères, where a number of other British visitors were also housed for short-term or more lengthy stays. At White's Hotel, Paine would have come into frequent contact with fellow British observers of the Revolution, many of whom (John Hurford Stone, Robert Merry, Sampson Perry, Mary Wollstonecraft or John Oswald for

instance), without having a formal representative role like Paine, also petitioned the revolutionary administration during the creation of the republic and expressed their views on the events they witnessed. Perry and Wollstonecraft shared Paine's views on the mutability of language, and Merry and Oswald were similarly engaged in the debate over the extent of popular participation desirable under the new republican regime. Paine's views on the misinformation being conveyed by the British press on revolutionary progress dovetailed with those expressed by Hurford Stone in his letters to his brother and Helen Maria Williams in her writings. These and other examples suggest that at least some of Paine's views, or more broadly his subjects of concern, might have been forged and determined in the numerous gatherings between British and Irish residents at both White's hotel, and later at Paine's rented lodgings in rue du faubourg Saint-Denis which he shared with fellow British nationals William Choppin and William Johnson where, as Rickman wrote, he was inundated with French visitors and British acquaintances.

21 The quality of Carine Lounissi's work is beyond reproach and her searching study into Thomas Paine's French experience, and the writings which were in part based on that experience, is a new and necessary addition to the already substantial body of writing on this disputed figure of the international revolutionary scene. Her scientific achievement is immense, and her transparency and skill as a historian an example to others.

NOTES

1. Manon Roland, An Appeal to Impartial Posterity: By Citizenness Roland, Wife of the Minister of the Home Department: Or, a Collection of Pieces Written by Her During Her Confinement in the Prisons of the Abbey, and St. Pélagie. Translated from the French (London: Johnson, 1795).
2. Thomas Paine, "To the English Attorney-General, on the Prosecution Against the Second Part of Rights of Man," in Philip S. Foner. The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine (New York: Citadel, 1945) 2: 511.

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Mots-clés: Thomas Paine, Révolution américaine, Révolution française, Constitution monarchique, Girondins, républicanisme, journée du 10 août, Convention Nationale française, procès du roi Louis XVI, la Terreur, Thermidor, Directoire, Napoléon, coup du 18 Brumaire
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